



Conflict Happens, CORE PLUS Helps

Managing Conflict Respectfully is Part of Every DOI Employee's Job

CORE PLUS offers conflict management skills, practices, and processes for raising issues, improving communications, resolving concerns and solving problems

As Your Employer of Choice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is dedicated to helping employees get the help they need. Whether the help is tackling problems at work or home, the Service wants to work with you to help get you the resources you need!

The Easier, Softer Way...

Wouldn't life be grand if people at work did and said what we wanted them to do and say? Wouldn't work be wonderful if only our co-workers and supervisors managed better?

Even in the best of situations, most of us experience conflicts at work. Luckily the Service offers employees an option for managing and resolving workplace conflicts and disputes. The solution is CORE PLUS.

CORE PLUS, administered by the Department of the Interior's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR), is voluntary and provides impartial and confidential assistance to any employee seeking to improve or resolve a workplace issue or concern. Assistance ranges from a confidential consultation, individual conflict coaching, communication, conflict management training, group facilitation, team-building, conciliation, or mediation services.

CORE PLUS also offers Service employees conflict management tools, dispute resolution assistance, and education and training opportunities to improve communication and build teams. CORE PLUS can also help supervisors manage change, strengthen teams and partnerships, and improve organizational performance.

CORE PLUS is:

- available to all employees;
- fair and impartial;
- flexible and informal;
- voluntary and confidential;
- non-adversarial;

- a safe place for difficult conversations; and,
- a source of information, education, and assistance to help reduce workplace tensions, improve communication, manage conflict, and build productive teams.

CORE PLUS also offers Service employees a quicker and less costly solution to their problems.

Although there are no time limits or formal requirements for seeking assistance through CORE PLUS, employees should be aware that contacting a CORE PLUS representative **does not** change the filing requirements and deadlines for the complaint processes. Nor does CORE PLUS replace any other complaint process available to Service employees. Anyone seeking CORE PLUS assistance will be encouraged to obtain information about all of their options and will be referred to the appropriate point of contact for reliable information on other processes.

An employee who seeks EEO counseling, files a complaint, or an administrative grievance may have the option to request an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process through CORE PLUS to attempt informal resolution of the issues underlying a grievance or other type of complaint. CORE PLUS helps employees consider their options so they can decide what will meet their needs in a specific situation.

If the parties agree to ADR, they try to resolve the grievance within 45 days (unless the Human Resources Office and the parties jointly agree to an extension) and can extend the timeframes up to 45 days (unless the parties jointly agree to an extension), for filing a grievance under the formal procedures. In the EEO process, ADR extends the counseling period to 90 days.

Either party, or the neutral, may terminate the ADR process at any time. The CORE PLUS neutral will discuss the reasons for termination or document the decision to terminate the process in writing and provided a copy of the documentation to the grievant and grievance official.

If the easier and softer way sounds good to you contact the Service's Bureau Dispute Resolution Representative, Ben Livingston, at 703.358.1935 or ben_livingston@fws.gov, a CORE PLUS coordinator in your regional office, a CORE PLUS roster member, or the Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution. Information about CORE PLUS is also available through your supervisor, a Human Resources office, an EEO office or any EEO counselor, or on the Internet at <https://portal.doi.net/cadr/default.aspx>

Employee Assistance Program

Each year, one out of five employees faces a significant problem that disrupts life at home and reduces productivity at work. Service employees can receive free help from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides a confidential and comprehensive program that can assist employees with resolving their personal concerns, including:

- Emotional Issues
- Relationship Issues
- Family Issues
- Alcohol Issues
- Job Concerns
- Financial Issues and Financial Planning
- Legal Issues

Employees can contact the EAP by calling 800-222-0364 or 888-262-7848 (TTY).

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